

NATIONAL DAY OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, I rise today with great pleasure to commend an exceptional group of my constituents and acknowledge September 12, 2007, as the National Day of Encouragement. The concept behind the National Day of Encouragement was developed in June 2007 as part of the National Leadership Forum at Harding University in Searcy, AR.

The National Leadership Forum, NLF, was composed of a group of enterprising high school students from around the country who were challenged to think of constructive ways to help their respective schools. One group said that discouragement or “the lack of encouragement” was the biggest problem they faced in school as well as in society today. From there, the idea of an official Day of Encouragement as a possible solution was born.

According to Andrew Baker, the co-director of NLF, the students chose September 12 as the National Day of Encouragement in hopes of “balancing the discouraging feelings of 9/11”. The goal was to “challenge people not to just think about the idea of encouragement but to do something that will encourage someone else.”

Since the conception of the National Day of Encouragement, grassroots efforts have been working towards creating a real sense of encouragement in cities, schools, places of employment, and homes. Even the smallest gesture such as a smile, a pat on the back, or a kind word, has the ability to communicate love and compassion that can raise spirits and spur motivation, especially on a day like September 12.

Americans have endured great hardship and heartbreak as a result of the terrorist attacks, but this has not broken our faith, courage and an unshakable commitment to freedom, democracy and, most importantly, each other. Yesterday, we remembered the tragedy of September 11, and we honored its victims. Today, we honor the victims again by remembering the sacrifices made by thousands of Americans to help the victims of the attacks and their families. Their acts of kindness and generosity inspired and encouraged the entire Nation.

I encourage my fellow colleagues, citizens of all ages, as well as those in schools, organizations, businesses, and media outlets, to encourage others on this day, through an act of service, a thoughtful letter, or words of kindness and inspiration to thereby boost the overall morale of all.

I would also like to commend the extraordinary group of high school students who participated in the National Leadership Forum this year. They have shown the ability to analyze critical issues with insight and intellect, and it is an honor to stand here before you today and recognize all of them and their accomplishments.

I yield the floor.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 130TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN HUMANE ASSOCIATION

• Mr. ALLARD. Madam President, children and animals are the most vulnerable of our Nation’s population, as they do not have a voice of their own. Organizations which aid animals or children are very important in creating and maintaining a humane, safe and just society. That is why I rise today to honor and praise the American Humane Association on the occasion of its 130th anniversary.

The American Humane Association is unique in America in that it is not only the oldest but the only national organization with the dual mission of protecting both animals and children. As a true American icon of humanity, the American Humane Association has been the voice of the most vulnerable both animals and children—for each and every one of its 13 decades of existence.

American Humane was formed on October 9, 1877, with the vital mission of protecting both children and animals from abuse, neglect, cruelty and exploitation. Over those years covering much of two centuries, American Humane has actively and successfully promoted humane values and education, built significant public awareness and understanding, and has developed programs and processes that effectively protect both children and animals. It has been a leader in advancing humanity in this Nation and has been a model for the rest of the world to see and emulate.

Among numerous other initiatives, American Humane, based in Denver, CO, originated such programs as “Be Kind to Animals Week,” and “Tag Day,” to educate the public on the need to treat animals humanely and to adequately identify their animals. American Humane is the only organization to monitor and certify the making of movies to ensure “No Animals Were Harmed.” The organization also created “The Front Porch Project,” an initiative to educate communities on how to protect children from abuse, and it was the world’s first organization to identify “The Link” between animal abuse and human violence.

I am grateful for American Humane’s continuing good work in advancing humanity on a national scale. The United States of America is greatly enriched by the ongoing work of American Humane Association, and I congratulate the Association on this significant historical milestone.●

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

HILTON HUMANITARIAN PRIZE TO TOSTAN

• Mrs. CLINTON. Madam President, I would like to commend the Senegalese-

based nonprofit organization Tostan, which today will receive the Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize. Tostan, founded by former Peace Corps volunteer Molly Melching, promotes basic education and helps to empower women and men to change their communities.

As one resident of The Gambia noted, “With this program, people will make change from within for themselves without anyone else’s help.”

The work of Tostan has transformed the lives of residents in Senegal and other African countries. While I was First Lady, I had the opportunity to visit Dakar to meet with Molly and the women and men who were working to address female genital cutting, FGC, in their communities.

I learned in these encounters that an extraordinary power is unleashed when people reach out to their neighbors and find common ground. When men and women begin to lift themselves up, they lift up their families and their communities as well.

Tostan is the catalyst for change in communities across Africa, and it produces results: More than 160,000 individuals have attended human rights and democracy classes run by Tostan; more than 1,000 community management committees—80 percent of which are headed by women—have benefited from Tostan’s guidance; and more than 2 million people in over 2,000 villages have made a public commitment to ending practices like FGC or child marriage.

Indeed, earlier this year, women in Senegal announced that they will be seeking to make that country the first in Africa to eliminate FGC entirely within the next 5 years—a pledge that would not have been possible without the work of Tostan over these many years.

Tostan will be using the award money from the Hilton prize to further its activities in countries across Africa to end female genital cutting, improve literacy, and promote small business and community development. I look forward to learning how these additional resources are used in the expansion of their programs.

The work of Tostan is a shining example of how democracy works; how women’s voices and men’s voices, can be heard, and can lead to change in their communities. I would like to again congratulate Tostan for receiving the Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize.●

RECOGNIZING APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY MOUNTAINEERS FOOTBALL TEAM

• Mrs. DOLE. Madam President, today I would like to recognize the Appalachian State University Mountaineers football team for pulling off one of the biggest upsets in college football history. To recognize this achievement, Senator BURR and I have introduced Senate resolution number S. Res. 309.

On September 1, 2007, the Appalachian State Mountaineers of the